



Position Qualification for Operational Communications
Communications

COMMUNICATIONS UNIT LEADER (NQS)

RESOURCE CATEGORY	Communications
RESOURCE KIND	Personnel
OVERALL FUNCTION	The Communications Unit Leader (COML) designs, orders, manages, and ensures the installation and maintenance of all communications systems
COMPOSITION AND ORDERING SPECIFICATIONS	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. This position can be ordered as a single resource.2. Discuss logistics for deploying this position, such as security, lodging, transportation, and meals, prior to deployment3. This position typically works 12 hours per shift, is self-sustainable for 72 hours, and is deployable for up to 14 days4. Requestor may specify any additional qualifications necessary based on incident complexity and needs

Each type of resource builds on the qualifications of the type below it. For example, Type 1 qualifications include the qualifications in Type 2, plus an increase in capability. Type 1 is the highest qualification level.

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COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	NOTES
DESCRIPTION	<p>Same as Type 2, PLUS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Rapidly assesses whether the area of operations comprises multiple geographic areas and whether they use the same communications policies and systems 2. Establishes physical interoperability connections between communications systems over wide areas 3. Establishes a communications plan among command center, staging, base, camp, and other operational sites 4. Establishes capacity of available radio frequencies and channels for incident response by multiple first responder disciplines, multiple jurisdictions, and numerous operational personnel 5. Supervises Communications Unit staff and is accountable for their safety and adherence to Incident Command System (ICS) procedures 	<p>Same as Type 3, PLUS:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides rapid assessment of communications options, taking into consideration incident objectives, known status of existing communications systems and infrastructure, pre-positioned plans within the jurisdiction's Interoperability Communications Plan, and rapidly available options for communications equipment and supplies 2. Reports status and recommendations within ICS procedures 3. Implements voice protocols, policies, and procedures necessary to make use of existing communications systems serving the incident area 4. Establishes logistics for extended use of communications equipment in challenging environments, including exchange and resupply of radios, phones, and computers for multiple shift changes 5. Establishes communications staging area 6. Plans for restoring and augmenting communications services, taking into account backup plans, reliability, and resiliency, based on situational awareness of incident environment 	<p>The COML:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develops plans for the effective use of incident communications equipment and facilities, including the Incident Radio Communications Plan 2. Oversees installation and testing of communications equipment 3. Supervises the Incident Communications Center Manager and Communications Technicians (COMT) 4. Distributes communications equipment to incident personnel 5. Maintains and repairs communications equipment, including data management infrastructure 6. Plans, organizes staff, manages, and demobilizes the Communications Unit in a safe and effective manner to meet incident needs 7. Coordinates with the incident sections, appropriate communications personnel, and other agencies to assist in accomplishing the overall incident objectives 8. Designs, orders, and ensures the installation and maintenance of all communications systems 9. Maintains accountability of assigned communications equipment 10. Establishes or transitions into a unit under the Logistics Section 11. Configures unit with personnel to support operations 	Not Specified
EDUCATION	Not Specified	Not Specified	Not Specified	Not Specified

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COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	NOTES
TRAINING	Same as Type 2	Same as Type 3, PLUS: ICS-400: Advanced Incident Command System for Command and General Staff - Complex Incidents	Completion of the following: 1. IS-100: Introduction to the Incident Command System, ICS-100 2. IS-700: National Incident Management System, An Introduction 3. IS-800: National Response Framework, An Introduction 4. IS-200: Incident Command System for Single Resources and Initial Action Incidents 5. G0191: ICS/EOC Interface 6. ICS-300: Intermediate Incident Command System for Expanding Incidents 7. E/L 0969: Communications Unit Leader, or equivalent	Identified equivalent trainings should meet or exceed course learning objectives.
EXPERIENCE	Same as Type 2, PLUS: 1. Successful completion of the National Qualification System (NQS) Position Task Book (PTB) for the National Incident Management System (NIMS) Type 1 Communications Unit Leader, or equivalent Authority Having Jurisdiction (AHJ) documentation 2. Experience in managing operational mission-critical first responder communications or communications systems, including accountability for emergency communications policies and procedures 3. Satisfactory performance during an ICS assignment as a chief, director, supervisor, or leader 4. Satisfactory performance as a NIMS Type 2 Communications Unit Leader	Same as Type 3, PLUS: 1. Successful completion of the NQS PTB for the NIMS Type 2 Communications Unit Leader, or equivalent AHJ documentation 2. Satisfactory performance as a NIMS Type 3 Communications Unit Leader	1. Successful completion of the NQS PTB for the NIMS Type 3 Communications Unit Leader, or equivalent AHJ documentation 2. Satisfactory performance as a COMT 3. Satisfactory performance as an Incident Communications Center Manager	Not Specified
PHYSICAL/MEDICAL FITNESS	Same as Type 2	Same as Type 3	Performs duties under light circumstances characterized by working consecutive 12-hour days under physical and emotional stress for sustained periods	Not Specified
CURRENCY	Functions in this position during an operational incident, exercise, drill, or simulation at least once every three years	Same as Type 3	Functions in this position during an operational incident, exercise, drill, or simulation at least once every five years	Not Specified



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COMPONENT	TYPE 1	TYPE 2	TYPE 3	NOTES
PROFESSIONAL AND TECHNICAL LICENSES AND CERTIFICATIONS	Same as Type 2	Same as Type 3	Federal Communications Commission (FCC): General Radiotelephone Operator License (PG)	Not Specified



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NOTES

Nationally typed resources represent the minimum criteria for the associated category.

REFERENCES

1. FEMA, National Qualification System (NQS) Position Task Book for Communications Unit Leader, latest edition adopted
2. FEMA, NIMS 509: Communications Technician
3. FEMA, National Incident Management System (NIMS), October 2017
4. FEMA, NIMS Guideline for the NQS, November 2017
5. FEMA, National Response Framework, June 2016